

**Pulaski County
Community Development Commission
Strategic Visioning Committee**

Tuesday, 2 August 2022
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Monday, 9 May 2022
Strategic Visioning Committee/Executive Board joint session
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: Commission President/Committee Chair Sheila Jimenez (Winamac) [both], Vice President Maurice Loehmer (County Commissioners) [both], Secretary Brandon DeLorenzo [Ex. Board], Membership Officer Kelsie Zellers [both], executive-board member Kathleen Thompson (County Council) [both]; Bill Champion [SVC]. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: Lynn Johns (Francesville) [SVC].

Guests present None.

Call to Order

President Jimenez called the meeting to order at 11:35 *a.m.*

Approval of Minutes

The November executive-board minute were approved as presented.

Motion: President Jimenez; second: Vice President Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all.

The strategic visioning committee's November minutes and February notes were approved as presented.

Motion: Councilor Thompson; second: Mr. Champion; no discussion; approval: all.

Executive Board: 2023 budget

The director presented his draft proposal for discussion, adjustment, and approval and included previous years' approved budgets for comparison, explaining his rationale for increases included in the budget and reviewing the projections that he had prepared for the budget's impact on the overall health of the Local Income Tax – Economic Development fund. Brief discussion ensued, and the proposal was approved for recommendation to the full commission as presented.

Motion: President Jimenez; second: Councilor Thompson; no discussion; approval: all.

Strategic Plan Implementation Report

The director reported on the progress of the Main Street Winamac organization, consultant work on the housing project, and various efforts on the broadband program, all part of the partnership between the Commission and the Community Foundation of Pulaski County through the latter's Aspirations-in-Action efforts.

The director and assistant Taylor Bailey would be conducting tourism-partnership meetings with local businesses in the sector to begin re-establishing relationships and to work toward updating the previously tourism strategic plan and setting up a tourism advisory committee.

The director would begin scheduling one-on-one business-retention/-expansion visits with major employers, a program that had been put on hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic; as part of the KIRPC rural-economic-development-model project, he would be expanding these meetings to ag-sector partners, too. Director Origer also had been focusing on improving agendas for bi-monthly Pulaski County Industrial Forum meetings to make them worthwhile for himself and participating partners. Of particular importance would be the August meeting, which would focus on reviving the work-release program in Pulaski County upon completion of the new dormitory in the justice-center basement; discussion ensued briefly regarding financing of that construction project.

Strategic Plan Implementation: Next Steps

Key Action Step I., Marketing/Branding Business Development: The director hoped to schedule his first CDC coffee hour in a number of years in mid-June, with the intention of holding these every quarter and asking a local elected official, business representative, or other interesting and prominent person to join him at each session. The revival of the quarterly newsletter had been tentatively planned for either July or October.

Key Action Step X., Institutional Capacity Building: Director Origer presented a comprehensive list of options for restructuring the Commission, including both the possibility of privatizing some economic-development efforts in Pulaski County, as is the case in many counties, and multiple options for development-oriented commission established under the *Indiana Code* (whereas the current Commission exists only as a creature of County resolution). The director suggested that privatization seems to be financially impossible at present, but could be addressed in the future, perhaps through a merger with and revitalization of the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce.

In reviewing the various statutory commissions, Director Origer highlighted various tools available to them not currently accessible to the County, and emphasized the greater ease of obtaining quorums and functioning with a number of smaller bodies than the 15-person structure currently in place. In discussing these various commissions, the director mapped out a plan that would reimagine the existing commission to serve as a “super-group” commission with representation of the statutory bodies to centralize supervision and budgeting.

Substantial discussion of these options ensued, including focus on the director’s existing extracurricular responsibilities for the Board of Commissioners and Council. Vice President Loehmer recommended updating job descriptions to fit the proposal, while the president suggested looking into the possibility of supporting future efforts with solar-project economic-development funds. Mr. Champion urged the director to bring this proposal to the attention of the Board and Council as soon as possible to start generating buy-in; the director agreed to present this at the bodies’ joint session in June.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

Executive Board: Motion: Councilor Thompson; second: Secretary DeLorenzo; no discussion; approval: all. 12:30 p.m.

Strategic Visioning Committee: Motion: Mr. Champion; second: Vice President Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all. 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan P. Origer,
Executive Director/Recording Secretary